

looking forward to buying you lunch.
[Laughter]

President Nazarbayev. Thank you very much, Mr. President, for hospitality and for warm feelings that I feel in this country and for the invitation. This is the third time that I'm in the Oval room since the independence of our country and as I am the President of Kazakhstan. And Kazakh nation never had experienced statehood before, and I had this blessing of becoming the first President of Kazakhstan, and the United States was the country that supported our independence and recognized it from the very first days. Thus in economics, in energy partnership, in policy, in war on terrorism, we've truly become close partners.

And Kazakhstan today is very proud that we have the highest rate of economic growth in the world, and a lot of countries learn from the experience of Kazakhstan today. But that wouldn't be possible if Taliban would not be defeated in Afghanistan. And that war was led by United States. And nobody in central Asia will feel safe and peace if we'd be surrounded by countries populated with terrorist people,

and if we'd be surrounded by countries where some people crave to put their hands on the nuclear weapons, which Kazakhstan renounced in the past voluntarily, and thus contributed significantly to global security.

The United States is the major investor, foreign investor into Kazakhstan. One-third of all foreign investments in Kazakhstan are from United States. And after this meeting, we'll publish the joint declaration, and you will—in that declaration, you will read about the details and what we have discussed and what we have achieved during these negotiations.

And I'm here today to tell once again that Kazakhstan is a friend of the United States because the United States is the country that guaranteed stability and protection of Kazakhstan when Kazakhstan renounced nuclear weapons. And we will continue to work in all fields of our cooperation that exist today.

President Bush. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:51 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Nazarbayev spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement by the United States of America and the Republic of Kazakhstan

September 29, 2006

We express satisfaction with the progress the United States and Kazakhstan have made in advancing our strategic partnership, and declare our commitment to a shared vision of stability, prosperity, and democratic reform in Central Asia and the broader region.

We affirm our commitment to advancing that vision through an increasingly dynamic and varied partnership that advances our global and regional objectives. We will deepen our cooperation in fighting international terrorism and the proliferation of

weapons of mass destruction. We will strengthen our cooperation to enhance regional security and economic integration and the reconstruction of Afghanistan and Iraq. We will expand our joint activities to ensure the development of energy resources, while supporting economic diversification and reform, market principles, and the development of small- and medium-size enterprises. We recognize that peaceful democratization invests citizens in the future of their nation. Developing

democratic institutions is therefore the crucial condition of long-term stability.

The United States and Kazakhstan reaffirm the importance of democratic development, and are committed to accelerating Kazakhstan's efforts to strengthen representative institutions that further invest its citizens in the political process, such as an independent media, local self-government, and elections deemed free and fair by international standards. We note that our two governments are signatories to international human rights covenants and our common membership in organizations whose goal is to support democracy and human rights, including the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. The United States supports efforts to promote democracy, strengthen religious freedoms, and bolster civil society in Kazakhstan. With the full participation of all political parties and non-governmental organizations, the United States supports the activity of the State Commission to develop a program of democratic reforms. Kazakhstan supports the assistance of American and other international non-governmental organizations promoting these objectives and will take the necessary steps to facilitate their legal functioning.

The United States commends Kazakhstan's traditions of religious tolerance and its efforts to promote inter-ethnic harmony and cooperation. We welcome the initiatives Kazakhstan has taken internationally to promote mutual understanding and strengthen religious freedoms, such as the Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, as well as initiatives to promote peace, such as the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia. These initiatives bring important contributions to inter-religious and inter-ethnic tolerance, as well as international security and conflict resolution. We commit to deepening our cooperation to help ensure mutual understanding and security in the world.

The United States recognizes Kazakhstan's leadership and commends its efforts in preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, thus enhancing global security. Kazakhstan was the first country to voluntarily renounce its nuclear weapons after the break up of the former Soviet Union and also closed its nuclear test site. This example reflects our shared commitment to threat reduction and non-proliferation remains a cornerstone of our joint effort to ensure global and regional security. We welcome new agreements to blend down highly enriched uranium in Kazakhstan and Kazakhstan's strong policy of strengthening the regime of nuclear non-proliferation as concrete steps in support of the recently launched Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism.

The United States and Kazakhstan are steadfast partners in the international war on terrorism. The United States is grateful to Kazakhstan for its unwavering commitment to strengthening stability in Afghanistan and Iraq. We commit to further strengthening the excellent cooperation already achieved by our two countries, and confirm the determination to strengthen our close cooperation in the fight against international terrorism and illegal trafficking in drugs, persons, and dangerous weapons.

We commit to further cooperation between our armed forces in counterterrorism and peacekeeping operations, both bilaterally and through NATO's Partnership for Peace Program.

We commend our energy partnership which has helped move Kazakhstan into the ranks of the world's leading reliable suppliers of hydrocarbon reserves. The United States welcomes Kazakhstan's recent accession to the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline which has made a valuable contribution to this important multilateral project. Our energy partnership will promote the participation of U.S. companies in exploring the reserves of Kazakhstan, as well as in the development of nuclear energy. Our nations

pledge to enhance common efforts to expand global energy supplies and will seek new means to deliver those resources to the international market.

We share a commitment to economic diversification across a range of industries and sectors. Recognizing Kazakhstan's macro-economic reforms and impressive economic successes, the United States will continue to assist in Kazakhstan's transformation into a strong, economically developed country. Both sides view liberalization and diversification of the economy as a key to sustained growth. The United States supports Kazakhstan's plan to join the world's fifty most competitive nations consistent with the strategy outlined by President Nursultan Nazarbayev. Strengthening the rule of law, taking steps to improve Kazakhstan's investment climate, and reducing business risk will contribute to that shared goal. We pledge our support for efforts under the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) to ensure that companies in the petroleum and mining industries observe international standards of transparency and accountability.

The United States supports Kazakhstan's membership in the World Trade Organization, and welcomes Kazakhstan's efforts to prepare for membership, recognizing that a market access agreement will enhance free trade and contribute to the continuing modernization of Kazakhstan's economy. The United States will send a team of experts to Kazakhstan in the coming months to continue this joint work. Both sides pledge to facilitate Kazakhstan's graduation under the Jackson-Vanik Amendment.

In order to strengthen friendship between our peoples, we intend to expand our cultural and humanitarian cooperation, including exchanges of students. We also intend to strengthen scientific and technical cooperation between researchers and students at universities, research institutes, and in the private sector.

The United States supports Kazakhstan's leadership in regional integration efforts including its significant investment throughout Eurasia and in Afghanistan. We declare our common commitment to strengthen the independence, sovereignty and security of, and to develop democratic institutions in, the countries of the region, ensuring their sustainable development and prosperity. We pledge to support legal trade by improving border crossings and customs procedures, the implementation of transportation and infrastructure projects, and the use of cross-border resources.

Confirming our commitment to this shared view to implementing the agreements achieved today, we declare our intention to further strengthen our strategic partnership through enhanced strategic dialogues on energy, military cooperation, trade and investment, and democratization. We express firm confidence that an enhanced strategic partnership between our countries will promote security and prosperity and foster democracy in the 21st Century.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Statement on Congressional Passage of Department of Defense Appropriations Legislation *September 29, 2006*

I applaud Congress for passing legislation that will provide our men and women in

uniform with the necessary resources to protect our country and win the war on